



EAA 485

October 2025—Panhandle Pelicans



Visit the last page to sign up for Girls in Aviation Day at the National Naval Aviation Museum or the many other exciting events coming up soon!

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

Immediately after the September meeting, 13 of us took the tour of Paradigm Parachute and Defense. See photos on eaa485.org, EVENT ARCHIVES. COO Eris Blissmer gave us a wonderful, 1-hour walk-through of the entire production facility. It was amazing!

Still no word on when the clubhouse roof will be replaced. Regardless of the roof status, I will pass around a sign-up for helpers to repaint the clubhouse walls and floors. I'm still looking for a volunteer to head up this effort.

As we approach the winter season when Scott Swanson will head up our EAA Ray Aviation Scholarship application process, I would like to inform members and parents of OTHER aviation-related scholarships out there. Most are for teens, some are for adults. You must join the organization to apply for one of its scholarships. Millions of dollars are available. The two major organizations with lots of other flight training scholarships are AOPA and EAA. Both organizations offer free membership to students.

AOPA's application window opens October 6th and is typically open for five months. See AOPA.org.

□ **Apply for EAA Aviation Foundation Scholarships** — The application period will open soon for the scholarships provided by the EAA Aviation Foundation. A variety of scholarships will be available for flight training and post-secondary education. The application period will run from **October 1 to December 19, 2025**, with all recipients being notified of their awards on **March 2, 2026**. Note that these scholarships are separate from the EAA Ray Aviation Scholarship. [Learn more >](#)

Some other organizations offering flight training scholarships include Women in Aviation, the 99s, Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals, Latino Pilots Association, and others. A simple Google search will get you headed to their websites for application information.

It's not only scholarship season, it's chapter election season! I introduced this at the September meeting. I presented what our Bylaws have to say, as well as status of all our chapter position holders. See adjacent slides. At the October meeting, any nominations for the Board of Director positions (top six on the chart) may be presented.

I previously neglected to include information on the SERFI Fly-In Oct. 17/18 at Evergreen Airport, AL. They are still recovering from the COVID years, and are actively seeking to grow. See the flyer in this newsletter.

There are numerous great aviation events in the area this fall. See Upcoming Events at end of this newsletter for links to several of them.

Nov. 1st will be our fall public Young Eagle event. As always, we are looking for the maximum possible number of pilots and ground volunteers. Pilots, please insure your EAA Youth Protection training and Background Check are up to date. Check that on eaa.org>My Account>Training Information.

Our October 11th meeting will feature Virgil Zetterlind updating us on the recent and very positive sweeping rule changes involving Sport Pilot and Light Sport Aircraft. “MOSAIC” in FAA terminology. We will attempt to film the presentation. If you are unable to make the meeting, one of many good Webinars on the MOSAIC topic will be put on by EAA Oct. 21st, 7:00PM CDT. See eaa.org>News & Media>EAA Webinars. It will be available in a recorded version afterwards.

See you October 11th!

Ralph

2026 Chapter Elections

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Time Served</u>	<u>“Normal” Term”</u>	<u>OK to Continue?</u>
President	Ralph Moser	4 years	2 years	Undecided
Vice President	Mark Rogers	4 years	2 years	Yes
Secretary	Jacob Abston	1 year	2 years	Yes
Treas/M’Ship	Kaydee Macdonald	6 months	2 years	Yes
BOD At Large	John McKiernan	4 years	2 years	Yes
BOD At Large	Duane Thiessen	4 years	2 years	Yes
YE Coordinator	Sean Londrigan	0	N/A	Yes
Ray Scholarship	Scott Swanson	6 months	N/A	Yes
Webmaster	Doug Francisco	30 years+	N/A	Yes
Newsletter	Courtney Wielander	2 years	N/A	Yes
VMC Club	Donna Barker	5 years	N/A	Yes
IMC Club	DeWitt Barker	5 years	N/A	Yes

*Flight Advisors (Mark Rogers and John McKiernan) and Technical Counselors (Doug Francisco, John McKiernan, and Mark Rogers) are all voluntary, non-elected positions. All are willing to continue.

Article XI. Elections

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BYLAWS

1. Prior to the October Chapter meeting nominations for any known vacancies of the Chapter Officers or Board Members will be solicited.
2. At the October Chapter Membership Meeting nominations will be presented to the Chapter Members. In addition, open nominations will be accepted from the Chapter Members.
3. Once all nominations have been received, a slate of nominees may be posted at the regular meeting place, or any place deemed appropriate by the Nominating Committee, and published in the Chapter Newsletter
4. Elections of Chapter Officers and Chapter Board of Directors will take place at the November Chapter Membership Meeting. Unless deemed inappropriate a raise of hands should suffice for the election of Officers/Board Members.
5. All newly elected Chapter Officers and Chapter Board of Directors shall assume their responsibilities no later than January 1.

The screenshot shows the SERFI website with a navigation menu on the left and event information in the center. The navigation menu includes: Home, Schedule of Events, Arrival/Departure Procedures, Fly-In FAQ's, Aircraft Judging Information, SERFI's Fly Market!, Slideshows of Events, Champions Past and Present, Vendor Information, Volunteers Information, SERFI Volunteer Cities, Evergreen's Weather, Contact Us, and Cool Links. The main content area features a 3D graphic for 'SERFI 2025' and text for the 'South East Regional Fly-In' on October 17-18, 2025, in Evergreen, Alabama. Below this is an aerial photograph of an airfield with many small aircraft parked. At the bottom, contact information for SERFI Chairman Stan Tew is provided.

serfi.org

SERFI

SERFI 2025

South East Regional Fly-In
October 17-18 2025
Evergreen, Alabama
Home of Friendly Folks & Flying Fun Since '91
Photos courtesy of Bubba Hamiter from his J-3 Cub

Home
Schedule of Events
Arrival/Departure Procedures
Fly-In FAQ's
Aircraft Judging Information
SERFI's Fly Market!
Slideshows of Events
Champions Past and Present
Vendor Information
Volunteers Information
SERFI Volunteer Cities
Evergreen's Weather
Contact Us
Cool Links

Check Us Out On
facebook

See WebMaster's B-17 Flight.

We've had
044444
Visitors to Date.

For additional SERFI information, contact SERFI Chairman [Stan Tew, 334-312-7934](#)
or the [Conecuh Chamber of Commerce](#) at (251) 578-1707 or Middleton Field at [251-578-1274](#)

Event A/C Pre-Registration Form.

**34TH ANNUAL
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL FLY-IN
SERFI - KGZH**

OCTOBER 17-18, 2025

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS (www.serfi.org)
OR CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

**FREE CAMPING UNDERWING
HOT SHOWERS
RV SPOTS (water & elec)
\$20/night - \$40 entire event
Early arrivals welcome**

**\$5 DONATION ADMISSION
AIRCRAFT JUDGING
(with awards)**



2024 GRAND CHAMPION



BONFIRE



CAR SHOW



RIDES AVAILABLE

**EVERGREEN 22nd ANNUAL SAUSAGE FESTIVAL
FOOD VENDORS / ARTS & CRAFTS
FUN FILLED CHILDREN'S AREA**

14134 HWY 84 EVERGREEN, ALABAMA 36401
334-312-7934

DRANO'S N979DL UPDATE

That is right! I finally have a registration number so in the eyes of the FAA it may not be a certified Experimental Amateur Built airplane yet, but now even they anticipate this being a flying machine!



Since my last update, I have mounted the Rudder, Horizontal Stabilizer, and Elevator. I have also connected the trim motor to both the switch and the trim position indicator making sure they work properly. But all these accomplishments were made because of fitting and preparation I had already done earlier. Most of my time recently has been consumed preparing the cowling, wings, and struts for painting.

I don't know of any way to make the grunt work of sanding, priming, sanding again, cleaning, taping, and cleaning again into an interesting article. It is boring and took me the better part of three days to get this all done trying to get ready to paint.

I need to back up a little here and tell you that sometimes things just fall into place when you are dealing with fellow pilots and aviation enthusiasts. I was almost ready to paint the wings when several critical elements all came together at the right time. Another pilot I know has a paint booth that is very close to the Milton Airport where my hangar is. His paint booth is fully equipped and was not being used. He said I could have it for a couple weeks. A couple months ago, I hurt my back when I tried to move these wings to my shop, but this time Scott Miller was ready and available to help me carry them. And finally, I wanted help shooting paint. Could I do it? ...Maybe so, but I would be learning while painting the very wings I wanted done. I do not know this skill or the techniques. There is a saying that an amateur can look like a master if he knows the right techniques and a master will look like an idiot if he doesn't know the right techniques.

DRANO'S N979DL UPDATE

Several months ago, a local businessman named John Jorgensen approached Ralph Moser saying he was interested in possibly helping paint an airplane. Ralph gave me the contact information and when I called him, he was both available and eager to help. John Jorgensen is a professional painter who specializes in cabinets and interiors but has extensive experience on automobiles and exteriors as well. Once I had things set up, he wanted to bring his equipment and shoot the color. John came in and did a great job. I would highly recommend him to anyone who is looking for help with this kind of project. I have included John's info with his permission: [John Jorgensen 251-407-6443 Johnjorgens@gmail.com](mailto:Johnjorgens@gmail.com). He is a master and knows the right techniques.

We still have to shoot paint on the cowling, the main struts, and the jury strut pieces which will happen next weekend but for now, N979DL is making progress. I am getting close to the next really big milestone which is hanging the wings, but I'll keep y'all informed!



September 13th,

VMC: deer crossing

IMC: dark approach

General Membership Meeting

Officer Reports:

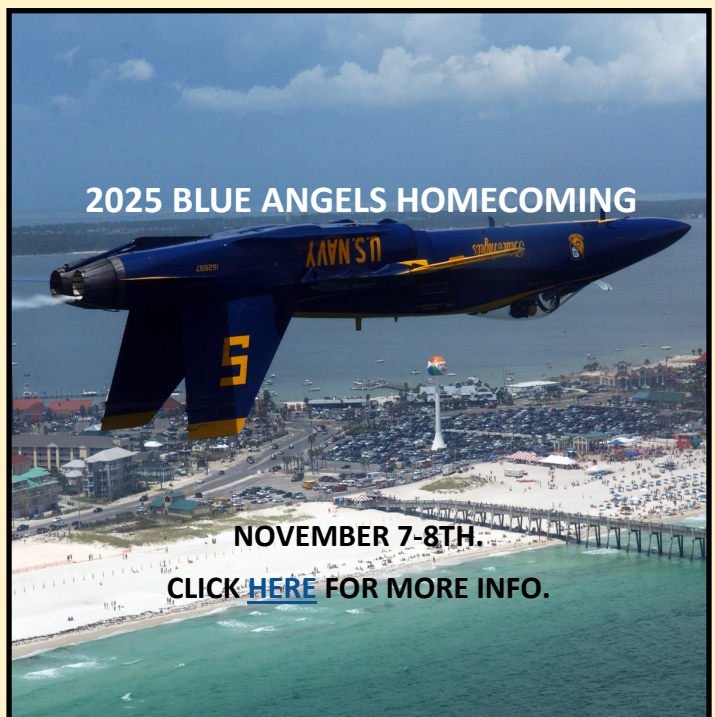
Oct. 11: Monthly Meeting + Mosaic Update
by Virgil Zetterlind

Nov. 1: Young Eagles Rally + Girls in Aviation Day

Nov. 15: Monthly Meeting

1030: Field Trip to Paradigm Parachutes and Defense Factory

—Secretary Jacob Abston





Want to Go to Space Camp?



STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

DATES TO KNOW

- ★ Applications are open late September to mid November
- ★ Camps are held late May to late August

STUDENTS CAN APPLY

- ★ Students no younger than 9 by May 15 and no older than 18 by August 31
- ★ Students who have not been to Camp before
- ★ Students who meet financial need requirements

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ★ All scholarships include camp tuition
- ★ Some scholarships also include merchandise, flight suits, and even travel!



It's Easy to Apply

Scan the code or visit
rocketcenterfoundation.org/scholarship-applications

- ★ All student camps are open to apply, general application
- ★ Winners notified in late February



Avoiding Wildlife Hazards: Strategies for Safe Takeoffs and Landings

JASON BLAIR, ATP, CFI-I

SEPTEMBER 2025

For pilots operating in today's increasingly complex airspace, wildlife encounters might not top the list of anticipated in-flight risks—but they should. Strikes involving birds, deer, coyotes, and even turtles have become a routine concern at both large and small airports. From the smallest grass strip to regional hubs, wildlife incursions pose a danger that is all too real. In fact, the FAA reported over 17,000 wildlife strikes in 2023 alone, a number that has grown steadily over the past two decades. These events can cause significant damage to aircraft, endanger lives, and result in costly insurance claims.

If you're a pilot who owns or operates an insured aircraft, learning how to proactively minimize these threats is critical. Managing wildlife risks goes beyond just good airmanship—it's an investment in safety, financial responsibility, and avoiding needing your insurance coverage. The good news is that there are some steps you can take to detect and avoid wildlife hazards, report dangerous activity to airport officials, and correctly document any incidents that do occur.

WHY WILDLIFE HAZARDS DEMAND YOUR ATTENTION

Many pilots associate wildlife strikes with dramatic bird ingestion events involving large commercial jets. But the truth is, general aviation pilots are just as vulnerable—if not more. Lighter aircraft are more easily damaged, and many GA operations take place at rural airports or airstrips where wildlife management is minimal.

Common species involved in strikes include:

- **Birds:** Gulls, raptors, waterfowl, and songbirds
- **Mammals:** Deer, coyotes, rabbits, and even feral pigs
- **Reptiles:** Occasionally snakes or turtles on southern runways

Birds remain the most frequent offenders. Gulls, ducks, geese, and raptors are among the most commonly struck species, particularly near bodies of water or agricultural areas. However, mammals such as deer, foxes, rabbits, and feral pigs present an equally serious risk, especially during early morning or nighttime operations. Even reptiles, such as turtles on runways, have been responsible for incidents. Whether it's a large deer bounding across a rural runway or a flock of starlings lifting off as you rotate, the danger is real—and the best response is prevention.

PREFLIGHT VIGILANCE: BUILDING WILDLIFE AWARENESS INTO YOUR ROUTINE

Avoiding a wildlife strike begins before you ever start your engine. A thoughtful walk-around can be just as much about observing the environment as it is about checking fuel caps and tire pressure. Make it a habit to scan the entire airfield environment, paying attention to grassy areas, drainage ditches, tree lines, and any spots where food, water, or cover might attract animals.

If your airport allows it—and many rural ones do—a drive down the taxiway has even been a possible way to check. Especially in the early morning hours when deer are frequently mulling around.

At towered airports, you can request information from ground or tower controllers about known activity, especially during dawn or dusk. Frequently, if there are any, they will notify you. I have many times, even at bigger towered airports, had them tell me about the coyotes hanging around the runway environment.

UNDERSTAND WILDLIFE PATTERNS: TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Wildlife behavior tends to follow predictable patterns tied to both time of day and season. Understanding these patterns can help you anticipate and avoid encounters.

Most bird activity peaks during the early morning and late afternoon hours—coinciding, unfortunately, with common flight training and recreational flying periods. Dawn and dusk are also when mammals like deer and coyotes are most active. These animals often emerge from wooded areas in search of food and water, sometimes crossing open airport environments that seem quiet and unthreatening.

Seasonal changes also influence wildlife risks. In spring and fall, migratory bird species are on the move and may be found in larger numbers, particularly near lakes, rivers, and wetlands. In summer, young mammals such as fawns or young foxes may be active and unaware of the danger posed by taxiing aircraft. Winter brings its own challenges as snow cover drives animals to new feeding grounds—including those adjacent to plowed runways or ramp areas.

SEASONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Spring and Fall: Peak times for migratory birds. Be extra vigilant during VFR flying.

Summer: Fawns and young mammals may be exploring near runways.

Winter: Food scarcity may drive animals into airport areas, especially if snowbanks reduce their natural habitat.

By factoring these patterns into your preflight planning and decision-making, you can reduce the likelihood of encountering a wildlife hazard at the worst possible moment.

OPERATIONAL TECHNIQUES FOR WILDLIFE AVOIDANCE DURING TAKEOFF AND LANDING

When it comes time to taxi, take off, or land, there are several practical techniques that can help reduce your exposure to wildlife risks—many of which come down to awareness and decisiveness.

Before you enter the runway, take a long look down both directions. Even be willing to back taxi down the full length if traffic volume allows it. Be sure to scan grass along the edges and any areas where animals might dart out from cover. If you see movement or birds nearby, don't rush your departure. A brief delay to allow animals to move on or disperse could prevent an accident.

Using your aircraft's lights can also be an effective deterrent. Turning on taxi lights, landing lights, or even strobes during takeoff and approach can startle wildlife and make your aircraft more visible to them. At night, make full use of lighting to illuminate the runway environment and watch for glowing eyes or movement near the edges.

If you see birds near the departure end during your takeoff roll, consider aborting if conditions permit, and it's safe to do so.

For landings, maintain a stabilized approach, but be ready to execute a go-around if an animal or bird is spotted in your landing zone. It's far better to delay your arrival than risk a collision while your options are limited.

At night, it can be much harder to see animals on the runway from greater distances, and the decision time to make a go-around choice may be limited. Be ready for this at airports that may have animal populations that end up in the runway environment. Some pilots choose to do a “low pass” over runways at night to get a good look before they make a landing. I can't honestly tell you if that helps or not. Some argue that making the low pass makes it more likely that animals will get disturbed and end up running onto the runway, while others argue that it scares them away and probably clears the runway. I haven't seen conclusive data either way. However, I will say, being ready to go around at night is the right option, no matter what.

If you encounter a “wildlife strike” and you are already on the ground, going back into the air is almost never the right option. If you are on the ground, you are experiencing decelerating energy and are less likely to cause more injury to passengers and crew than if you try to go back into the air. If you do happen to hit any wildlife after touchdown, keep that power out and do your best to keep steering the aircraft in the safest direction possible until the aircraft has come to a stop.

IN-FLIGHT WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS: WHAT TO DO

If you do find yourself on a collision course with wildlife, your first priority is to maintain control of the aircraft. This is especially important if birds suddenly lift into your path on final or just after rotation. Resist the urge to make sharp evasive maneuvers—overreacting could cause a stall or runway excursion. If a bird strike occurs, continue flying the aircraft, considering the potential for continuing at maneuvering speed, and assess the damage.

Damage from a strike may not be immediately obvious, especially if the bird does not hit a visible part of the aircraft. Pay close attention to engine sound and instrument readings, particularly if you suspect ingestion. If the engine begins to run rough or loses power, declare an emergency and begin standard emergency procedures for your aircraft type.

Be cautious of any potential effects on flight controls. An animal strike may affect ailerons, flaps, elevator/stabilator control input. If you have had a strike, carefully assess the effects and if there are any problems with maneuvering your flight controls.

Striking an animal during landing or rollout is also a serious event. If it happens, maintain directional control, brake appropriately, and vacate the runway if/when possible. Notify airport staff or ATC immediately so they can respond and prevent a second aircraft from encountering the same hazard.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REPORTING WILDLIFE HAZARDS

As pilots, we are the front line of wildlife strike reporting. Timely and accurate reports allow airport authorities and federal agencies to track problem species and develop effective deterrents. Your observations can contribute to future mitigation efforts that improve safety for everyone.

Always report any wildlife sightings or incidents to airport management, even if no damage occurred. Provide details such as the time, species involved, location, and number of animals. These reports help build a clearer picture of local wildlife behavior and support funding for airport wildlife management programs.

Additionally, pilots are encouraged to submit reports directly to the FAA's Wildlife Strike Database using Form 5200-7. These reports are not punitive, and the data they contain is critical for national trend analysis, airport risk assessments, and environmental planning.

HANDLING INSURANCE AFTER A WILDLIFE INCIDENT

Should you experience a wildlife strike that results in damage to your aircraft, taking the right steps immediately afterward is essential—not just for safety, but for ensuring your insurance claim is processed without complications.

Begin by photographing the damage as soon as it is safe to do so. Take both wide and close-up shots of the affected areas, such as the propeller, windshield, landing gear, or engine cowling. Note the date, time, location, and environmental conditions, and record any witness statements from passengers or airport personnel.

If there are remains of the animal or bird, photograph them for species identification. This may sound unpleasant, but insurers and FAA officials may need this information to confirm the nature of the incident.

Notify your insurance provider as soon as possible, ideally within 24 to 48 hours. Be prepared to submit maintenance records, pilot logs, inspection reports, and your completed wildlife strike report. If an A&P mechanic inspects the aircraft for damage, ensure their findings are documented in detail.

Some insurers also require you to coordinate inspections through approved shops or underwriters. Review your policy in advance to understand what procedures are required after a wildlife incident.

Be ready to make an NTSB report if the damage fits into a reportable “accident” category under 14 CFR 830. This can usually be done by contacting your local FSDO office, which will route you to someone on call for accident reporting.

HOW AIRPORTS MANAGE WILDLIFE—AND HOW PILOTS CAN HELP

Airports across the country have adopted a range of strategies to reduce wildlife risk. At larger airports certified under Part 139, a formal Wildlife Hazard Management Plan (WHMP) is required. These plans typically include habitat modification, fencing, dispersal tools like pyrotechnics or propane cannons, and even trained dogs or falcons used to scare away birds.

Smaller airports may rely on more informal methods, but pilots can play an important role by supporting local efforts. If you observe overflowing trash, standing water, or tall uncut grass that might attract animals, bring it to the attention of airport staff. If your airport doesn't have a wildlife mitigation plan, consider advocating for one through the airport board or user advisory groups.

Reducing wildlife hazards is a shared responsibility between airport operators and pilots—and your engagement makes a difference.

STAY VIGILANT, STAY SAFE

Wildlife strikes are not rare. They're an ongoing operational hazard that demands attention, preparation, and calm execution when things go wrong. By taking time to scan for wildlife before departure, understanding when animals are most active, and remaining vigilant throughout all phases of flight, you can dramatically reduce your risk.

When incidents do occur, thorough documentation and prompt reporting help ensure that your insurance provider can assist with repairs and recovery. Equally important, sharing your experiences with airport authorities and aviation safety programs contributes to a safer national airspace system.

Whether you're flying a Cirrus, a Piper Cub, or a King Air, the risks from birds and mammals don't discriminate—but preparedness can make all the difference. Stay sharp, stay informed, and stay safe.

EAA and Local Chapter Sites

- [EAA 485](#) [EAA 1265](#)
- [EAA HDQTRS](#) [EAA 108](#)
- [EAA 416](#)
- [Interesting Links](#)
- [Making the First Airbus 220 Time Lapse](#)
- [Jetman Unleashed in Dubai](#)
- [Boeing 737 Time Lapse Build](#)
- [F-18 Low Level](#)
- [High Speed Carrier Maneuvering](#)
- [Miscellaneous](#)
- [1800wxbrief.com](#)
- [FAA Notams](#)
- [Barnstormers](#)
- [Skyvector.com](#) Flight Planning, Charts
- [AirNav.com](#) Airport info, Fuel Prices

Normally meetings will be held at [Roscoe Field Airport \(82J\)](#) (Uni 122.8) on the **Second Saturday** of each month at **10:00 AM** unless otherwise posted. **If flying in, check NAS Pensacola (KNPA) NOTAMS for possible TFRs and the [Roscoe Field Airport website](#) under the Arrivals tab for important arrival and departure information.**

Driving: From Hwy 98 turn south on Aileron Avenue and enter at the main airport entrance. Turn right at the dumpsters and follow the single-lane paved road. Just short of the blue aircraft hangars, turn left. Our white clubhouse is at the end on the left. If the main airport entrance gate is locked, continue south on Aileron Avenue to the end and turn left into the back gate. Open and close the gate behind you. Make a right once past the blue hangars. You'll see our white clubhouse at the end on the left.

For more info contact:

[Ralph Moser](#) (847) 736-4603.

2025 Officers and Committee Chairmen

- President:** [Ralph Moser](#)
(847) 736-4603
- Vice President:** [Mark Rogers](#)
- Tech Counselor/Flight Advisor:** (251) 228-0356
- Secretary:** [Jacob Abston](#)
(251)424-5004
- Treasurer/Membership:** [Kaydee MacDonald](#)
- Ray Scholarship Coordinator:** [Scott Swanson](#)
(309)-267-9710
- Young Eagles Coordinator:** [Eric Goldman](#)
(317) 910-2513
- Webmaster:** [Doug Francisco](#)
(850) 453-5501
- VMC Club /** [Donna and DeWitt Barker](#)
- IMC Club** (850) 572-0288
- Newsletter Editor:** [Courtney Wielander](#)
- Tech Counselor** [John McKiernan](#)
Flight Advisor (850) 291-4134
- Thatcher CX4 Build**





Home Of The
PANHANDLE PELICANS

EAA 485 Pensacola, FL

EAA 485
news

Upcoming Events

(CHAPTER EVENTS IN CAPS):

October 17-18, SERFI (Southeast Region Fly-In) at Evergreen, AL (GZH) click [here](#)

November 1st, YOUNG EAGLES RALLY, click [here](#)

November 1st, Girls in Aviation Day, Naval Museum Atrium click [here](#) to register

November 1-2nd, Thunderbirds at Keesler AFB, Biloxi, MS. "Thunder Over The Sound" click [here](#) for more info

November 8th, FINAL 2025 MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETING + Family Holiday Lunch?

November 14-15th, [Blue Angels Homecoming](#), NAS Pensacola

Chapter Meetings:

Saturday, October 11th, 2025

08:30-09:30, VMC/IMC Club Meeting.

1000-1100, General Membership

Meeting:

Pledge

Guests

Officers Reports: Vice-President,
Secretary, Treasurer/Membership

Ray Scholarship – Scott Swanson

Young Eagles – Eric Goldman/
Sean Londrigan

Member Build Projects Update

Guest Speaker—MOSAIC Update—
Virgil Zetterlind

Cheeseburger/Chips/Cookies Lunch
after meeting-\$5 donation requested

NOV. 1-2

2025

KEESLER AFB, BILOXI MS



THUNDER

OVER THE SOUND